



## **The News You Don't Hear From Iraq**

### ***May 6, 2004***

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## From the Front Lines

### *News Reports*

#### **Once Hostile Iraqis Turn Hospitable**

By Ron Harris

Published: Thursday, Apr. 22 2004

HUSAYBAH, Iraq - As Marines commemorated the lives of five of their fallen comrades Thursday, some say that they may have turned a corner in their relationship with residents of the troublesome city of Husaybah.

Marines say formerly truculent residents have begun waving and greeting them cordially, just days after some of the fiercest fighting and after Marines conducted harsh door-to-door searches of homes.

Meanwhile, Marines say that Iraqi police and the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps are showing new signs of cooperation after being less than fully willing to help Marines bring order and stability to the region.

"It's a significant change in the right direction," said Capt. Dominique Neal, the new Lima Company commander. "I was surprised. I thought they'd be more fearful than anything. I think the amount of force that we displayed over the past few days definitely has changed their outlook."

Neal was recently promoted to replace Capt. Richard Gannon, the company commander who was slain along with four other Marines on Saturday during a daylong battle. Also killed were Cpl. Christopher Gibson, Lance Cpl. Ruben Valdez, Lance Cpl. Michael Smith and Lance Cpl. Gary F. VanLeuven.

Unlike Fallujah, where Marines have been locked in a standoff with Iraqi insurgents over the past few days, Marines in Husaybah have never lost control of the western city of 100,000, just 300 yards from the Syrian border.

After Saturday's fighting, in which 12 Marines were injured and scores of Iraqis were slain, Marines began a fierce, two-day search of homes in the area, usually kicking in the same doors upon which they previously would have knocked.

"One thing that I do know is that the Iraqi people respond to who they think is the strongest," said Neal, 29, of San Francisco. "They saw the velvet glove when we first came in, and then we took off the glove and showed them the iron fist."

Lima Company 1st Sgt. Daniel Calderon said that during his patrols, he noticed a different attitude from the populace.

"You could tell people were friendlier," said Calderon, of Jacksonville, Fla. and Sgt. Wilson E. Champion, who had just come back from the most recent patrol, said he saw a similar shift in attitudes.

"The first few days, I think everybody was scared," said Champion, 23, of Jupiter, Fla. "But a lot of patrols are coming back and saying people are starting to be friendly again. Maybe it's because they know that we're not kidding."

Iraqi police were reportedly patrolling in areas in which they normally were not seen. Lima Company Staff Sgt. Matthew St. Pierre was so surprised that he stopped one police officer and asked to see his credentials.

"I couldn't believe it," said St. Pierre, of Vallejo, Calif. "Usually these guys are nowhere to be found. This guy had just graduated from our police academy. He was so proud that he ran home and got his diploma to show me."

When Marines found an unexploded roadside bomb during a patrol earlier this week, they set up a perimeter around the device, and to their surprise, members of the police and the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps set up an outer perimeter to help safely guide cars and pedestrians around the site.

Meanwhile, Iraqi police continued to pick up bodies of dead Iraqi insurgents who had been killed in fighting Saturday and Sunday. Many of them had come to the area from Fallujah and Ramadi. The police chief for the region of Al Qaim, an area about the size of Bermuda, said the bodies of a large number of the Iraqis killed in the fighting were still unclaimed Thursday. Apparently, they were not from the region and did not have relatives or friends in the area, he said.

Many residents, particularly women, children and families, have been fleeing the area recently, concerned about renewed fighting.

Marines, however, said they believe they had struck a blow to the heart of the local insurgency. They said they found dozens of weapons caches and even an Iraqi woman who was hiding Iraqi fighters in her home and providing a safe house for them to store weapons.

"We found at least one terrorist there, and we found AK-47s, and Russian machine guns," Neal said. "Two houses from a mosque, we found another cache, two rocket-propelled grenade launchers and multiple rocket-propelled grenade rounds."

While Marines are pleased with the new reception, they remain wary, Calderon said.

"Every time it calms down, the Marines get a little nervous," he said, "because things have a tendency to brew up again."

**BAGHDAD, Iraq, April 2, 2004** – Students of the city's 14th of July Girls' School received an unexpected gift when soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 36th Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division, handed out 500 backpacks loaded with school supplies, candy and other items.

As part of an ongoing effort to reach out and work within communities in their area of operations, commanders look for locations where the United States can best provide civil assistance.

"We were constantly receiving emails from friends and family members back home wanting to know what they could do to help out," said Staff Sgt. Joseph Campbell, the battalion civil-military liaison noncommissioned officer. "We worked with the area council members and identified an easy and affordable means by which they (friends and families) could help."

Located in the Rusafa district of Baghdad, the 14th of July School, an all-girls' school, is part of the battalion's neighborhood.

"This was a win-win type situation," Campbell said. "Family members were able to be involved, and we were able to give something back to the community in which we live."

Speaking through a translator, battalion commander Lt. Col. Charles Sexton led students in a chant of "S-C-H-O-O-L" and held a competition to see which class was the loudest. The winner received its new backpacks first.

"We all know how important school is, and we all know how important it is that you have the right supplies to be able to complete your studies," Sexton said. "And that is why I am proud to present to you this little gift from the soldiers of the 1-36, 'Spartans,' and the American people."

Being the fourth visit to area schools, the unit's soldiers have delivered about 400 backpacks per school, bringing the distribution total to 1,500, Campbell said.

Pupils react with excitement. Sometimes ignoring calls to stay within their assembled groups, they ask the soldiers for autographs and to have their picture taken with them.

"I love the American soldier, they are beautiful. I love what they do for us," said one student as she stood in line.

"As I look out on this group of outstanding students, many of you reaching an age where you will soon be going on to college, I'm happy to say that you are taking a step into a new future for Iraq," said Col. Pete R. Mansoor, 1st Brigade Combat Team commander, "a future where all will be able to receive an education no matter their race, religion, creed or gender."

**MOSUL, Iraq** - Task Force Olympia Soldiers from 3rd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division (Stryker Brigade Combat Team) detained 14 people wanted for anti-Coalition activities, destroyed an improvised explosive device and collected a variety of weapons and munitions in Northern Iraq April 23.

Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment conducted cordon and searches in the northeast neighborhood of Hashimiyah and detained 14 people wanted for planning and conducting attacks against Coalition forces. During the searches, IED-making materials were discovered and confiscated.

Soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 3rd Infantry Regiment discovered an IED on a road leading out of northern Mosul. Iraqi Police secured the site and the IED was destroyed. No injuries were reported.

Members of the Coalition for Iraqi Unity, a concerned group of citizens in northwestern Iraq, approached Soldiers of 1st Squadron, 14th Cavalry west of Tall Afar near the Syrian border and turned in a large cache of weapons consisting of 351 100mm artillery rounds, 12 82mm mortar rounds, 10 hand grenades, five rocket propelled grenade launchers and one SA-7 rocket.

The same unit reported another weapons turn-in by an Iraqi citizen in Tall Afar that consisted of five 120mm mortar rounds, 22 60mm mortar rounds and five 60mm mortar tubes.

## *Letters/Articles from Soldiers*

As he prepared to lead his troops into action in Fallujah, a Marine Company Commander took time to write his father, a retired Marine. "This battle is going to have far reaching effects on not only the war here," he wrote:

"But in the overall war on terrorism. We have to be very precise in our application of combat power. We cannot kill a lot of innocent folks. . . . There will be no shock and awe. . . . This battle is the Marine Corps Belleau Wood for this war. . . . A lot of terrorists and foreign fighters are holed up in Fallujah. It has been a sanctuary for them.

The Marine Corps will either reaffirm its place in history as one of the greatest fighting organizations in the world or we will die trying. The Marines are fired up. I'm nervous for them though because I know how much is riding on this fight. However, every time I've been nervous during my career about the outcome of events when young Marines were involved they have ALWAYS exceeded my expectations.

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Here's an interesting e-mail from a chaplain in the Army Reserve who has been called to active duty to support our troops in Iraq. They are Psychology Operations personnel who speak the local languages and work with the people. Thus, he has a good perspective to what is really going on in Iraq.

April 2004

He writes...

Hi All,

In light of today's death toll in Al Fallujah I'd like to offer you a different view than you may see on your TV news. First, I'm not one that bashes the media for bias. Yes, they have a bias..don't we all..but I'm not one that sees conspiracy. But I have noticed, that deaths in Iraq get a whole lot more attention than the good things that happen here, a whole lot more attention. So, here's some background on Al Fallujah to keep in mind.

A) Why is it in the news almost every night? Because it is one of the FEW places in all of Iraq where trouble exists. Iraq has 25 million people and is the size of California. Fallujah and surrounding towns total 500,000 people. Do the math..that's not a big percentage of Iraq. How many people were murdered last night in L.A.? Did it make headline news? Why not?

B) Saddam could not and did not control Fallujah..he bought off those he could, killed those he couldn't and played all leaders against one another. It was and is a 'difficult' town. Nothing new about that. What is new is that outside people have come in to stir up unrest. How many are there...that's classified, but let me tell you this...there are more people in the northeast Minneapolis gangs than there are causing havoc in Fallujah...surprised?

C) Then why does it get so much coverage? Because the major news outlets have camera crews

permanently posted in Al Fallujah. So, if you are from outside Iraq, and want to get air time for your cause, where would you go to terrorize, bomb, mutilate and destroy? Al Fallujah.

D) Why does it seem to be getting worse? Two answers..

1) This country became a welfare state under Saddam. If you cared about your welfare..you toed the line or died. The state did your thinking and your bidding...want a job..pledge allegiance to the Baath party..want an apartment, a car, etc...show loyalty..electricity, water, sewage, etc..was paid by the state. Go with the flow..life is good..don't and you're dead. Now, what does that do to initiative? drive? industry? So, we come along and lock up sugar daddy and give these people the toughest challenge in the world..FREEDOM...you want a job..earn it! A house? Buy it or build it! Security? Build a police force, army and militia and give it to yourself? Risk your lives and earn freedom. The good news is that millions of Iraqis are doing just that, and some pay with their lives. But many, many are struggling with Freedom (just like East Germans, Russians, Czechs, etc...) and they want a sugar daddy..the USA to do it all. We refuse...We don't want to be plantation owners..we make it clear we are here to help, not own or stay..they get mad about that, sometimes. Nonetheless, in Fallujah, the supposed hotbed of dissent in Iraq..countless Iraqis tell our psyopers they want to cooperate with us but are afraid the thugs will slit their throats or kill their kids. A bad gang can do that to a neighborhood and a town..that's what is happening here.

2) We have a battle hand off going on here. The largest in recent American history. The Army is passing the baton to the Marines in this area. There is uncertainty among the populace and misinformation being given out by the bad guys. As a result there is insecurity, and the bad guys are testing the resolve of the Marines and indirectly you; the American people. The bad guys are convinced that Americans have no stomach for a long haul effort here. They want to drive us out of here and then resurrect a dictatorship of one kind or another.

Okay, what do we do? Stay the course. The Marines will get into a battle rhythm and along with other forces and government agencies here, they will knock out the crack houses, drive the thugs across the border and set the conditions for the Fallujans to join the freedom parade or rot in their lack of initiative..either way, the choice will be theirs. The alternative? Turn tail, pull out and leave a power vacuum that will suck in all of Iraq's neighbors and spark a civil war that could make Rwanda look like a misdemeanor. Hey America, don't go weak kneed on us...585 dead American's made an investment here..that's a whole lot less than were killed on American highways last month. Their lives are honored when we stay the course and do the job we came to do; namely set the conditions for a new government and empower these people to be the great nation they are capable of being.

So, when you watch the reports from Al Fallujah..remember...there's more to the story than meets the camera's eye.

God bless,  
John

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April 2004

I am a soldier with the U.S. Army serving in the 16th Combat Engineer Battalion in Baghdad.

The news you are hearing stateside is awfully depressing and negative. The reality is we are accomplishing a tremendous amount here, and the Iraqi people are not only benefiting greatly, but are enthusiastically supportive.

My job is mostly to be the driver of my platoon's lead Humvee. I see the missions our Army is performing, and I interact closely with the Iraqi people. Because of this, I know how successful and important our work is.

My battalion carries out dozens of missions all over the city — missions that are improving people's lives. We have restored schools and universities, hospitals, power plants and water systems. We have engineered new infrastructure projects and much more. We have also brought security and order to many of Baghdad's worst areas — areas once afflicted with chaos and brutality.

Our efforts to train vast numbers of Iraqis to police and secure the city's basic law and order are bearing fruit.

Our mission is vital. We are transforming a once very sick society into a hopeful place. Dozens of newspapers and the concepts of freedom of religious worship and expression are flowering. So, too, are educational improvements.

This is the work of the U.S. military. Our progress is amazing. Many people who knew only repression and terror now have hope in their heart and prosperity in their grasp. Every day the Iraqi people stream into the streets to cheer and wave at us as we drive by. When I'm on a foot patrol, walking among a crowd, countless people thank us — repeatedly.

I realize the shocking image of a dead soldier or a burning car is more salable than boring, detailed accounts of our rebuilding efforts. This is why you hear bad news and may be receiving an incorrect picture.

Baghdad has more than 5 million inhabitants. If these people were in an uprising against the United States, which you might think is happening, we would be overwhelmed in hours. There are weapons everywhere, and though we are working hard to gather them all, we simply can't.

Our Army is carrying out 1,700 convoys and patrols each day. Only a tiny percentage actually encounter hostile action. My unit covers some of the worst and most intense areas, and I have seen some of the most tragic attacks and hostility, such as the bombing of the United Nations headquarters.

I'm not out of touch with the negative side of things. In fact, I think my unit has it harder than many other Army units in this whole operation. That said, despite some attacks, the overall picture is one of extreme success and much thanks.

The various terrorist enemies we are facing in Iraq are really aiming at you back in the United States. This is a test of will for our country. We soldiers of yours are doing great and scoring victories in confronting the evil terrorists.

The reality is one of an ever-increasing defeat of the enemies we face. Our enemies are therefore more desperate. They are striking out more viciously and indiscriminately. I realize this is causing Americans stress, and I assure you it causes us stress, too.

When I was a civilian, I spent time as a volunteer with the Israeli army. I assure you we are not facing the hostility Israelis face. Here in Iraq, we Americans are welcomed by most Iraqis.

I'm not trying to sound like a big tough guy. I'm scared every day, and pray before every mission for our safety and success. This is a combat zone. We are in the heart of the world's leading terrorist-birthing society. I remember well how families of suicide bombers who attacked in Israel received tens of thousands of dollars from Saddam Hussein for their kin's horrendous crimes. A generation of Iraqis was growing up in a Stalinist worship of such terrorism.

They are no longer.

Instead, Iraqis today are embracing freedom and the birth of democracy. With this comes hope for the future.

Yes, there are terrorists who wish to strike these things down, but this is a test of will we must win. We can do this, as long as Americans at home keep faith with the soldiers in this war. We are Americans, after all. We can and must win this test. That is all it is.

Roche serves with the U.S. Army's 16th Combat Engineer Battalion in Iraq and is an adjunct fellow at the National Center for Public Policy Research, a conservative think-tank.



## Sacrifices of Our Troops

### *News Reports on Soldiers*

#### **Soldier Chose Iraq Over Retirement**

Chicago Tribune

April 20, 2004

Army Chief Warrant Officer Wesley Charles Fortenberry could have stayed home.

Having served 19 years in the Army, the combat helicopter pilot from Woodville, Texas, was eligible for retirement, his father said. But Fortenberry, 38, decided to accompany his comrades to Iraq.

"He could have put his papers in," said his father, Charles. "Those helicopter gunners and pilots who fly the Apache were like family to him. And he felt that he might save lives."

Fortenberry and his gunner, Chief Warrant Officer Lawrence Shane Colton, 32, were killed April 11 when their Apache helicopter was shot down west of Baghdad International Airport. The two-man crew belonged to the Army's 1st Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division based in Ft. Hood, Texas.

Fortenberry, a married father of three boys, was one of three sons of a career military man. Each of them would serve in the Army, following in their father's footsteps.

Because Fortenberry was the kind of person who completed things, his father said, he was determined to build a career in the Army.

Also like his father, Fortenberry enjoyed crafting knives as a hobby. Before leaving for Iraq in late February, his father gave him a special knife that he had made. It was designed, he said, to pry open plexiglass in the cockpit of a helicopter. Fortenberry was to carry it in case something went wrong.

To his father, it was no coincidence that his son and Colton, both devout Christians, died together on Easter.

According to an account given by officials to the families, Fortenberry and Colton were responding to a distress call made by a National Guard convoy pinned by enemy fire and running out of ammunition. Flying in low, their Apache drew fire away from the convoy while firing back at enemy positions.

Restored old cars: Colton grew up in Oklahoma City, where he was a member of his high school's varsity cross-country running squad. During his nearly 13 years in the Army, Colton's assignments included a posting in Germany, where he met his wife, Inge.

To relax, Colton played drums and guitar. His other hobby was restoring old cars. He had been looking forward to rebuilding a 1968 Chevy Camaro with his 11-year-old son.

"He was the most perfect man I have ever known," his wife said. "He never said a bad word about anybody, and he always made a bad situation better."

Green Beret was 'all soldier': They didn't call him "No Slack Billy Jack Stack" for no reason.

The nickname stuck to Army Sgt. Maj. Michael Boyd Stack since his fellow Green Berets knew what to expect from the non-commissioned company leader. He set high standards for his men as well as for himself, pushing everyone to hone their skills as members of the Army's Special Forces.

"I'll tell you, when he put on that uniform and walked out of the house, he was all soldier," said Stack's brother, Cecil.

On April 11, Stack, a 16-year veteran in Special Forces whose Army career spanned almost 30 years, became the sixth Green Beret to die in Iraq under Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Stack, 48, of Lake City, S.C., was killed while conducting combat operations in Al Anbar province. He was assigned to the Army's 2nd Battalion, 5th Special Forces Group based in Ft. Campbell, Ky.

He joined the elite corps of soldiers at 32, a relatively old age for a new commando. He had quit the 82nd Airborne Division because he wanted more of a challenge, his brother said.

Stack, a father of six, loved to spend time with his family. He and his brother would go catfish fishing and surf fishing together.

And Stack was an avid cook. He was adept at frying turkeys, and he could bake some mean jalapeno cornbread, his brother said.

"He stood for the best and brought out the best in everyone," his brother said. "He was my hero."

## **Soldiers Fight Wounds to Reunite With Unit**

By Justin Willett

Staff writer

April 21, 2004

Staff Sgt. Daniel Metzdorf steadied himself on his wooden cane as he put on his beret. Sgt. Robert Jepsen, who limped slightly, stepped up beside him and waited patiently.

Behind them, in the cavernous shed at the Green Ramp, families looked past the two, focusing on the C-17 that brought their loved ones back from Iraq.

It was the second time in less than 24 hours that Metzdorf and Jepsen made the 200-yard walk from Green Ramp to Pope Air Force Base's flight line, where they met soldiers returning from their unit - the 2nd Battalion of the 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment.

It was no ordinary reunion. In fact, Metzdorf said, it was a "miracle by God" that they were even alive.

## The explosion

On the evening of Jan. 27, their 10th day in Iraq, Metzdorf and Jepsen were among about a half-dozen soldiers patrolling Highway 1 near Camp Kalsu about 45 minutes southwest of Baghdad. The soldiers were looking for homemade bombs along the highway.

They found what they were looking for, a rigged artillery shell hidden in a pile of trash.

After getting out of their armored Humvees and approaching the pile, Metzdorf and Jepsen saw the makeshift bomb just before it exploded.

"We were close enough that we were like, 'Whoa,' and then it went off," Metzdorf said during an interview at his Fayetteville home Monday.

"The first thing I started saying was, 'This ain't good, Jepsen. This ain't good.'"

2nd Lt. Luke James, 24, Sgt. Cory Mracek, 26, and Staff Sgt. Lester Kinney II, 27, died instantly.

Pfc. Jamie O'Connell suffered minor injuries in the explosion and was treated in Iraq.

The blast sent Metzdorf and Jepsen to the pavement.

Metzdorf suffered extensive trauma to his right leg and it was amputated above the knee in an Army hospital in Baghdad.

Jepsen suffered major shrapnel wounds on his face, legs and hips. He has four titanium plates in his face and hopes to regain full feeling in his left leg.

## Recovery

Metzdorf and Jepsen reached Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., a couple of days apart, around the first of February.

Jepsen "was a lot worse off in the beginning because Dan only had one injury, and he had so many," Metzdorf's wife, Teresa, said.

Jepsen had a bad reaction to his pain medication. He hallucinated frequently, and at one point tried to tear out his feeding tube because he thought it was connected to his catheter.

"I had a lot of tubes running out of my body," Jepsen said. "Every day I would find something new that was very obvious. One day I noticed I had a (tracheostomy) in my throat.

"That was kind of odd."

As doctors worked on Jepsen, repairing his broken jaw and eye socket, removing shrapnel from his hips and grafting skin from his thigh over the wounds, he thought about the Army.

About a month later, Rowe returned to perform a re-enlistment ceremony for Jepsen.

Before the incident, Jepsen saw the Army as just a job, but "after this, that's where I wanted to be.

"The support from my unit was amazing. I thought, 'I can't leave this.'"

Metzdorf, for his part, took on the role of resident joker and cheerleader at Walter Reed.

His leg healed relatively fast. The doctors in Baghdad had made a good "first cut," and after four surgeries and 200 stitches he was ready to be fitted for a new leg.

The C-leg he wears is an \$85,000 computerized prosthesis that can be programmed to mimic the action of a real leg.

The leg can also swivel, so Metzdorf can swing the foot in front of his face with little effort. He does this often, whether it is to startle someone seeing the leg for the first time or to put a sock on his rubber foot.

Metzdorf said amputees at Walter Reed were a pretty close-knit group. They kept up with each other's progress and provided a fair amount of good-natured ribbing.

"The camaraderie up there is really strong," Metzdorf said. "The 101st (Airborne Division) guys would gang up on us, and say, 'Get away from me you one-legged freaks.'"

Metzdorf and Jepsen made progress. They were surrounded by their families - Teresa Metzdorf was able to take leave from her job and cater to the men - and looked forward to rejoining their unit.

Command Sgt. Maj. James Miller contacted Teresa Metzdorf and asked whether her husband and Jepsen might be able to visit Fort Bragg for the unit's homecomings.

"They wanted them to feel like they're still part of the unit," she said.

#### At the plane

Leaders from the 82nd Airborne Division tried to let Metzdorf set the pace, but he moved too slowly.

He later said he was nervous and was trying not to stumble on his way to the tarmac.

Upon reaching the plane, Metzdorf and Jepsen stood side by side in the receiving line, which included Col. Patrick Donahue and Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas Capel, both of the 1st Brigade of the 82nd. The unit oversaw the 2nd Battalion of the 505th.

Metzdorf and Jepsen shook hands or hugged each soldier as he left the plane.

"Hey, it's Lou Rawls," Jepsen yelled as one of the soldiers appeared.

He hugged the young man and then passed him along to Metzdorf, who did the same.

Metzdorf steadied himself on his cane as soldiers he had not seen since the roadside explosion embraced him.

After all 101 soldiers had left the plane and stood in formation, Metzdorf and Jepsen moved to the front of the line and led the troops inside to meet their families.

The men credit Staff Sgt. Tony Southard, who returned Monday evening, with saving their lives. He took control of the scene after the explosion and orchestrated their removal back to Camp Kalsu.

"He's my personal hero," Metzdorf likes to say.

"It's kind of embarrassing," Southard said. "They would have done the same thing for me."

Southard said the only good thing about the incident was that it made everyone in the unit pay more attention to threats.

"I never let my guard down again," he said. "But we missed those guys. They always kept us entertained."

### Aftermath

Angie Davis, Jepsen's fiancée, said Jepsen looked "awful" when she first saw him. Davis is a personnel clerk with the 1st Battalion of the 17th Cavalry Regiment.

"But whenever he was able to talk he was already talking about 'The next deployment,'" she said. "He loves the Army. He loves to do this."

While Jepsen hopes to rejoin his unit as an infantryman, Metzdorf is more realistic about his prospects, though no less optimistic.

He wants to rejoin his unit as a instructor.

"Once I'm better, I'm going to try to come back and get a job at my unit," Metzdorf said.

Before he can plot a comeback, however, Metzdorf is heading back to Walter Reed. He has a few months of rehabilitation remaining.

Jepsen said he is done, except for some follow-up dermatology work on his face. He is already running again, though only a mile at a time.

Speaking for both of them, as he often does, Metzdorf said they have put the incident behind them.

"We're not going to dwell on it," he said. "I know I'm not going to be able to be an infantry squad leader anymore. Robert is obviously not going to be an airborne team leader anymore."

"It's frustrating. We were both very active guys. You just have to know your limitations. That's probably the hardest part."